

The Generator

Issue 440
January 2018



Palmerston Model Engineering Club
www.pnmecc.org.nz - pnmecc@trains.net.nz

Managers of the Marriner Reserve Railway - Marriner Street - Palmerston North
PO Box 4132 - Manawatu Mail Centre - Palmerston North 4442



PNMEC Members at the 2018 convention. From left Dave Turner, Murray B, Cynthia C, Chris M, Janice B & Richard L. Tony Brown had left when we took the photo.



Tony Brown with the Best Non-Electric Locomotive Trophy for his 2 x Diesel Locos



Richard, Chris and Murray's Putt-Putt Boats ready for the challenge



All the boats ready to set sail. 2 or 3 sank at the wharf. Others sank at sea. Tauranga club were the eventual winners of the Les Moore Trophy.

What's on this month and coming up
Check the PNMEC Club [Calendar](#)

**Track running at
Marriner Reserve Railway**

January	21 st	1pm - 4pm
February	4 th	1pm - 4pm
February	18 ^h	1pm - 4pm

Locomotion 2018

March	3 rd & 4 th	10am - 4pm
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The January Club night will be the
Presidents BBQ Thursday 25 January 2018
It is the same location as last year.
All members, partners and kids are welcome from 3.00pm
See the following map for directions.



The Driveway to the BBQ.
Please park on the road if able bodied.
There is plenty of room.

Robert and Margaret's Home is at the junction of Hansens Line and Te Arakura Road. This is off the end of Milson line.

The committee is currently looking for an editor to gather the articles for "The Generator". This is probably the easy part. Murray is still happy to put it all together and publish it to the internet.

If you would like to be notified when this newsletter is published, send us an email with your **Name, Club** and **Email** address to pnmec@trains.org.nz with "**Generator Please**" in the subject line.

Report on the November Club Night

As usual, the November club meeting was the annual dinner, held once again at the Cosmopolitan Club in Linton Street. Attendance was down a little on previous dinners and some members have mentioned cost of both the dinner and of travel to attend. Those that attended appeared to have a good time and the food was up to the Cosy Club usual standard. There was a good bit of mixing between groups and most members stayed for quite a while after the food was served. Hopefully we can sustain or increase the numbers in future. If any members have ideas or suggestions about this event the committee would be grateful to receive them for discussion at a future committee and/or general club meeting.

Letter from England

By Stan Compton

I just happened to be living in Vancouver, BC when Alan Villiers arrived there as Captain of the replica of the "Mayflower". He had sailed from the UK as a teenager. He had joined the crew of a square rigged ship, one of the few still left in the grain trade, loading at Melbourne in South Australia in the twenties. That was the start of his life in the world of sailing ships. Now in 1959 he gave a talk in a Vancouver theatre about a cruise by sail around the north of Scotland. This was a pleasure to hear and watch the film made by him of that cruise.

He wrote a book "The Cruise of the Conrad" that is well worth reading, about his buying in 1937 a Danish full-rigged ship 110 feet long built as a sail-training ship. He fitted her out and with a crew of boys whose parents were able to pay for their sons to sail almost all the way round the world, no older than fifteen, his promise was they will return as men. Arriving in New York he was asked for his Masters Certificate. He had sailed for years as Master of Swedish grain ships whose owners had never asked for one but his First Mate was certified, which was acceptable.

The model Engineering world has changed since I started building steam locomotives fifty years ago, a visitor to our track site in Hereford asked me where all the British rail models were. He was thinking of five inch of three and a half inch gauge locomotives that used to be popular years ago. Times have changed, the trend now is to buy a share in a 7½" gauge steam locomotive. Such a pity. The satisfaction of driving the product of one's own efforts is considerable.

One problem is the loads of heavy adults who expect to be carried. Often two grand parents with a small child whose weight is negligible. I can recall in my early days with no charge for rides a donation box provided funds and adults waited while their children had a ride.

Did any of my readers see the TV program about a stage actor and his wife who have travelled all of the canals in Britain and even into Europe? Now in the mature years they ventured into southern India to travel on a house boat on the canals of the Malabar Coast. Built originally to transport spices to the Port of Cochin, now with a different spelling to when I was stationed near there for eighteen months from 1944. It was an interesting experience to live in such a hot climate with very high humidity. We were preparing Landing Craft to defend India but the war ended so I imagine those craft were left there.

To obtain some exercise a group of us would row an open boat called a "Whaler", 17 foot long out at 0600 hours while the air was cool on the backwaters near the coast. No house boats then. How fortunate we were to travel to such a country with such different customs.

As a Petty Officer in the engine room branch of the Royal Navy the beggars thought we were wealthy but our pay was minimal, besides most of us allocated half of it to our Mothers. We were advised by our medical officers not to buy any products sold by street traders to eat, common sense told us not to buy cold drinks from a youth with a number of bottles with rusty battered caps on the bottles of juice! Unlike a certain Prime Minister of New Zealand who picked up a bug that way.

When the time came to leave by sea our ship ran aground on a sand-bar offshore and for the first time of our tour of duty we could start to get a sun-tan!

My duty on running days at Hereford track site is to supervise the crossing of passengers for the inside track over the ground-level track. I have found that a bridge does not justify the expense and I check every train on the ground level track to see if all is well. One day I could see a child in distress due to a spark from the exhaust of a bought locomotive that was overloaded. I yelled out to the guard to apply the brakes. He could not see the problem but I could, spark arresters do not always work. Driving a steam locomotive in full gear will lift any small coal that should be sieved out, but the climb up from the station needs plenty of steam. Incidentally an ice lolly affected a cure!

About 1970 the British government had an interest in the space-race and gained from the design of the German V2 rockets that caused such damage to London during WWII. A base was set up at Woomera in Australia and the last of the "Black Arrow" rockets named "Prospero" instead of "Puck", the fictional sprite who put a girdle round the earth in 40 minutes. It was felt that the last name could be misinterpreted!

The team at the base only has minimal facilities compared to the USA and had spent a whole day out at the launch site trying to cope with the wind and blown sand preventing a successful launch. Frustrated they arrived back at their base where the Aussie barman had set up their pints of beer. "Did ya launch ya rocket?" There was no need to ask, the whole area could hear if it was a success. "Did the wind blow yer match out?" Taken from "Backroom Boys" by Francis Spufford.

I read in our local newspaper that a group of children had been brought over from Chernobyl for a summer holiday. A volunteer dentist checks their teeth, often in a bad state. Twenty years ago I was driving my locomotive at a Traction Rally when I noted a boy about twelve in the queue for a ride so enquired and found they were from Chernobyl in Russia so to make his day I made him the driver of the loco. I walked alongside him controlling the throttle. I still recall the delight on his face.

New bridge decking at Marriner Reserve Railway nearly completed.

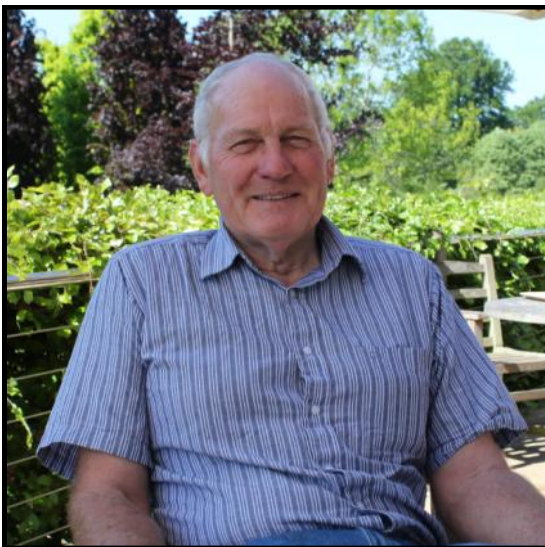
Great work by the Thursday workers.



The Generator

The Officers of the PNMEC

PRESIDENT	Robert Edwards	(06) 280-3057	pnmec-president@trains.net.nz
SECRETARY	Fin Mason	(06) 356-7849	pnmec-secretary@trains.net.nz
TREASURER	Kerry Puklowski	(06) 353-6189	pnmec-treasurer@trains.net.nz
EDITOR	Position Vacant		pnmec-editor@trains.net.nz
TRACK CONVENER	Richard Lockett	(06) 323-0948	pnmec@trains.net.nz
VICE PRESIDENT	Murray Bold	(06) 326-9665	pnmec@trains.net.nz
COMMITTEE	John Tweedie	(06) 358-0150	
	Cynthia Cooper	(06) 354-7100	
	David Bell	(06) 329-0969	
	Chris Morton		



Profile - Fin Mason

I have been making “things” for as long as I can remember; initially from the wood salvaged from the boxes that arrived at the Tokomaru railway station from the Hawkes Bay in late summer containing the peaches and pears to be preserved for consumption by the family later on. The tools I had access to then, were a hammer and a saw; being on a farm the saw also served to cut the home-kill sheep into sides! The fasteners were the nails rescued from the fruit boxes and carefully straightened. When I was about ten years old, the family moved to the farm at Mangawhata, on the road between Rangiotu and Glen Oroua. This property to my great delight, had a workshop which included a work-bench with vice and a few more hand tools. An early project

on the farm was to fell a stand of macrocarpa trees which were milled for general farm use, for example gates and stock yard railings, and for me, a source of building material. This was supplemented with the battens used in the making of the crates used in packaging the 80 pound cheeses for shipping to England, which I would obtain when accompanying my Dad delivering the day’s milk production to the dairy factory. This was also my source of nails. At this time construction was generally of models of tractors, trucks and farm machines. My older brother and I then started purchasing Meccano, as much as our limited finances permitted, and then as a joint Christmas present, were given a Number 7 set. Serious engineering modelling could now be undertaken. Throughout high-school years, now with an income from working seasonally for the local hay-making contractor, Ike Cooksley, and at the dairy factory making the export cheese crates, the Meccano set was upgraded by the addition of the gear set, electric motors and other items not included in the basic kit. Model aircraft also became an interest at this time, initially rubber powered, moving on to control-line models powered by the popular Mills 1.3cc diesel engine.

On leaving high-school, I took up a civil engineering cadetship with the Ministry of Works based in Taumarunui. The works undertaken by this office was mainly the reconstruction of the highways in the area, plus the construction bridges and the new prisons at Turangi. New highway constructions included that along the Western side of Lake Taupo and from Tokaanu to Taurewa. I carried out investigation and construction set-out surveys on these projects. A shift then to Palmerston North City, designing and constructing street works, notably with the removal of the Railway, the reconstruction of Main Street from West Street to Princess Street, and the Carter Crescent subdivision. Stormwater pipelines, including the pipe along the reconstructed Main Street and across the Square, sewers and watermains. The next move was to the Franklin County Council based in Pukekohe. Here the focus was on land drainage;

constructing drainage channels, stop banks, floodgates and pump stations. One of the pump stations on the Mangatawhiri swamp, off the Pokeno to Thames road, was an Archimedian screw, 13 ft in diameter, discharging through a 6 ft diameter pipe. Other works undertaken included the installation of the sewerage reticulation and treatment system for the village of Drury. The next and final work related move was back to Palmerston North City, again involved in general municipal engineering design and construction. Roading work included the extension of Summerhill Drive and Pacific Drive. As Drainage Engineer and following the flooding in 1996, I concentrated on stormwater drainage and flood protection. Significant works were the design and construction of channel improvements, stop banking and in places, piping of the Kawau Stream from Heretaunga Street to the Mangaone Stream at Pioneer Highway. Ongoing to this day is the replacement of the Ferguson Street pipelines by a single pipe from Dahlia Street, Princess street to Pioneer Highway at Botanical Road.

Pam and I have two children, both living in Auckland. Our daughter's work takes her overseas from time to time. This gives us the opportunity to drive to Auckland and take charge of the grand-children. No problem these days; they are of an age where all that is needed is to feed them and get them off to school.

My involvement with the Club probably came as a result of seeing the AGM advertised in the local press soon after my return to Palmerston North in 1980. Roly Penhall was the Newsletter editor and writer at this time. He was a guard on NZR trains and from observations he recorded in the Newsletter, he probably wrote most of his copy whilst riding in his van at the end of the train somewhere between Wellington and Taumarunui! I inherited this position somewhere along the way, very early in my computer learning curve. I tapped out the scripts in my lunch hours at work, remember this was long before home PC's were common, and the process was quite literally "cut and paste". I probably joined the Committee then and did a stint as secretary I think. In the mid 80's the Club embarked on the extension of the original track and I was in the fortunate position to be able to design and set out the new layout and produce designs for the bridges. With retirement I re-joined the committee and took on the role of secretary, which position I still hold.

I always planned to set up a workshop for hobby engineering in retirement and noting colleagues leaving the workforce and losing the inclination to follow up on their planned retirement activities, I started collecting tools well in advance of the event. Like John Tweedie I took advantage of the Polytech night school workshop courses. We enjoyed the facility of a very well equipped workshop and benefited from the tuition of experienced and enthusiastic engineers. I know our tutors enjoyed these sessions as much as we did; mostly from the diverse range of projects and problems that we brought with us. With their encouragement I was able to add to my workshop tooling and complete the construction of the Dore-Westbury milling machine that I had obtained from Leith Baker.

I have long been fascinated by high powered piston aero engines and the aircraft they power. Perchance, I spotted an article in a model aviation magazine about a fellow in the US developing castings for a working quarter scale Rolls-Royce Merlin engine. We corresponded and in time I was able to secure a set of the castings. It has taken some time to get to the present stage of construction; it is very much a learning experience for me.

I guess we all expected to have plenty of time in retirement to devote ourselves entirely to our hobby, but one way or another we find many side tracks. A significant one for me is developing and maintaining our lifestyle property. And then somehow having become the recipient of a collection of family photographs and documents, I have decided to bring some order to them, have embarked on a family genealogy programme, and have joined the local Genealogy Society. Another interest is in local history and to further this activity, have joined through U3A (University of the Third Age) a group recording the personal oral histories of anyone who has been around for a while. So be warned, I intend with microphone in hand, to tap into that rich store of local history that my fellow members of the Model Engineering Club hold.